



General Assembly

20th Special Session

9th plenary meeting

Wednesday, 10 June 1998, 7 p.m.

New York

Official Records

President: Mr. Udovenko (Ukraine)

The meeting was called to order at 7 p.m.

Agenda item 8 (continued)

General debate

The President: I give the floor to His Excellency The Honourable Andrew Scott, Solicitor-General of Canada.

Mr. Scott (Canada): Like many countries, Canada views its drug problem as serious. Canada considers the drug problem to be a major health and public safety issue. We are particularly concerned about drug abuse among our young people. We are dealing with our drug problem through a balanced approach aimed at reducing the supply of drugs as well as the demand for them.

Canada's approach to the drug problem is outlined in a document entitled "Canada's Drug Strategy", which has been distributed to members. The long-term goal of this balanced strategy is to reduce the harm to individuals, families and communities associated with drugs and alcohol. This strategy is led by Canada's Ministry of Health, which in itself speaks to our approach to dealing with this problem.

We are also well aware that drugs feed organized crime. Just as the United Nations is strengthening its efforts to combat organized crime, so are we. The Government of Canada has made organized crime its top law-enforcement priority. Our approach is aimed at taking the profits out of drug-trafficking.

Although Canada's climate precludes the cultivation of either coca bush or opium poppy, we do produce cannabis, especially that which is grown indoors. Indeed, we have become an exporting country. Cannabis is the most commonly used illicit drug in Canada, followed by cocaine and heroin, with a moderate use of synthetic drugs. We are also concerned about the availability of raw materials used in the manufacture of synthetic drugs and the fact that information about their manufacture is freely available, including on the Internet.

Therefore, as a result of the challenges we face, the Government of Canada has established a number of priorities within our national drug strategy. These include development of responses to address the significant harm associated with injection drug use. In this regard, Canada is experiencing a particularly serious health crisis in Vancouver, with a high level of overdose deaths and one of the highest rates of HIV infection in developed countries. We are working closely with our provincial and local partners to identify innovative approaches to prevention and treatment.

Another priority focuses on enhancing our efforts, and involving youth in finding solutions, to prevent the use of drugs by young people. Canada is also enhancing its focus on large-scale trafficking and the seizure of the proceeds of crime. Through the introduction of key legislation, we have provided the police with the tools required to deal effectively with organized crime. We are also working on a national strategy on organized crime. As part of our efforts in that area, we will introduce

98-85460 (E)



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legislation in our Parliament this fall to deal with mandatory suspicious-transaction reporting.

Here at the special session, Canada is particularly pleased to see consideration of the Declaration on the Guiding Principles of Drug Demand Reduction. Demand reduction is an essential part of a balanced approach to the drug problem, something that we have long practised in Canada and advocated in the United Nations and elsewhere for some time. We believe that the Declaration is important in that it will mark the first time an international agreement has been reached on the basic principles of demand reduction.

Canada was honoured to have been the host of the United Nations International Drug Control Programme (UNDCP) youth event, Youth Vision Jeunesse, which brought more than 200 energetic young people from more than 24 countries to Banff, Alberta, in April to identify best practices in youth substance-abuse prevention. The "Vision from Banff" is a powerful one, coming from the young people themselves. I hope that everyone has heard the message and had a chance to see the video and read the document. Working to prevent substance abuse among young people is one of the priorities of UNDCP, and one which Canada will continue to support.

(spoke in French)

Canada believes that regional cooperation is a crucial tool in combating the global drug problem. In this regard, last month Canada was elected to the chairmanship of a working group within the Organization of American States Inter-American Drug Abuse Control Commission.

(spoke in English)

That group has been tasked by leaders in this hemisphere with developing a multilateral evaluation mechanism that will evaluate national and international anti-drug efforts. This work may serve as a useful example for the United Nations in efforts to develop a global evaluation mechanism.

Furthermore, our Finance Minister has committed himself to convening, this year, a group of Foreign Ministers from this hemisphere to discuss the impact of the drug problem. The Ministers can link the drug problem not only to transnational organized crime but also to other foreign policy issues such as its economic and social costs, the violence associated with drugs and their impact on

human security, as well as discuss the appropriateness of supply and demand reduction strategies.

At this United Nations special session, Canada is pleased to be able to announce that we have increased our financial support to UNDCP by 25 per cent over the last two years. Canada will work closely with the United Nations Commission on Narcotic Drugs and with UNDCP in the coming months to follow up on the commitments contained in the Political Declaration and the associated documents — on precursors, amphetamine-type stimulants, judicial cooperation, money-laundering, demand reduction and alternative development — that we will adopt today.

Finally, Canada wishes to offer its congratulations to the many countries and individuals whose vision and hard work have resulted in these documents. We welcome the leadership and coordinating role of UNDCP in implementing these undertakings. Canada strongly supports the principle of shared responsibility and the process of working together to evaluate and address drug problems with our global, bilateral and multilateral partners. I am confident that this special session has generated the international momentum which will provide the basis on which we can all address, with renewed vigour and capacity, the serious threat of illicit drugs.

The President: I thank the Solicitor-General of Canada for his statement.

I give the floor to His Excellency The Honourable Charles Margai, Minister for Internal Affairs and Local Administration of Sierra Leone.

Mr. Margai (Sierra Leone): I shall preface my address by extending, on behalf of my President and of the Government and the people of Sierra Leone, my condolences to General Abdulsalam Abubakar, head of State of Nigeria, as well as to the Government and the people of that sister Republic, on the sudden demise of General Sani Abacha, his predecessor, an illustrious son of the soil of Africa and a great contributor to the maintenance of international peace and stability, as exemplified by his uncompromising stance in the restoration of democracy to Sierra Leone. This irreparable loss will be mourned by all. May his soul rest in perfect peace.

I bring you greetings, Mr. President, from President Alhaji Ahmad Tejan Kabbah and from the Government and the people of Sierra Leone.

It is gratifying to see us assembled here today, united in spirit, effort and determination, to address the perennial problem of drug abuse, which, if not contained, may have devastating social consequences for our various societies.

Like many other countries, Sierra Leone is experiencing acute problems associated with the illicit production, consumption and trafficking of dangerous drugs. This session, therefore, could not have been convened at a more appropriate time, as we approach the next millennium with a concerted and determined effort to rid the world of dangerous drugs.

The consumption and trafficking in Sierra Leone of the plant *Cannabis sativa*, although introduced by the former Government of the All People's Congress, assumed alarming proportions with the emergence of the Revolutionary United Front (RUF), the senseless rebel war and subsequent junta misrule by the National Provisional Ruling Council and the Armed Forces Revolutionary Council (AFRC).

According to information supplied by the Drug Enforcement Unit of the Central Investigations Department, there has been a tenfold increase in the number of arrests associated with the possession and trafficking of *Cannabis sativa*. In 1996 and 1997, a total of 563 kilograms of herbal cannabis was seized at Lungi international airport. This is a clear indication that the drug is not only consumed in the country, but trafficked across its borders.

Prior to the inception of the RUF rebel war in 1991, the cultivation of *Cannabis sativa* was restricted to the northern and western areas of Sierra Leone. The rebel incursion and the two aforementioned military regimes encouraged widespread cultivation and abuse of dangerous drugs country-wide. Energetic young farmers who were once engaged in rice farming — rice is the country's staple food — and the cultivation of other cash crops, have now diverted their attention to the cultivation of cannabis in a bid to quickly enrich themselves.

The traditional methods of trafficking drugs — in commercial cargoes, luggage, body cavities and so forth — remain the most common. Illicit trafficking by sea is posing a major concern, particularly when small unregistered and unseaworthy vessels are involved in such coastal exercises, as well as in transshipments of consignments from larger vessels. This method of trafficking is made easier because of Sierra Leone's expansive coastal areas and numerous rivers, which are

penetrable, and therefore susceptible to serving as entry points.

It is indeed disheartening to note that those who suffered most during the seven-year rebel war and subsequent misrule in my country by the junta were children forcibly conscripted as soldiers by the AFRC/RUF junta. This is an issue needing urgent international attention, through carefully formulated and coordinated programmes. The attendant consequences of the events flowing from the rebel incursion and the junta misrule are a clear manifestation of how drug abuse can undermine democracy and the socio-economic fabric of society.

The anti-narcotics squad of the Criminal Investigation Department is the main organ responsible for the enforcement of drug laws in Sierra Leone. Apart from its role in supply reduction, the squad collaborates with other agencies, such as the Pharmacy Board, non-governmental organizations, youth groups and the Ministry of Education, to enhance demand reduction campaigns. Before the junta interruption, the Government adopted new measures to cope with the challenges posed by drug abuse and illicit trafficking at the national level. Centralized inter-ministerial coordinating bodies comprising personnel from different agencies were established to galvanize resources and improve coordination between law-enforcement agencies, particularly customs, the police and the judiciary, to achieve greater complementarity between drug law-enforcement agencies responsible for demand reduction campaigns. Notwithstanding these measures, there is an urgent need for the establishment of a drug enforcement agency with international support, particularly in the form of equipment, training and finance.

Mindful of the fact that drug abuse is a crime that permeates international borders, the Government of Sierra Leone has introduced legislation to deal with the problem, such as the Dangerous Drugs Act of 1960 and the Pharmacy and Drugs Act of 1988, which introduced stiffer penalties. The Government is determined to relentlessly pursue the fight against drug abuse and has in consequence ratified all United Nations conventions relative thereto.

Technical assistance is therefore required from UNDCP and other international agencies to help harmonize our national legislation with these conventions, especially the 1988 Convention against Illicit Traffic in Narcotic Drugs and Psychotropic Substances, to enable

us to tackle international crimes associated with drug-trafficking or money-laundering. Furthermore, UNDCP and other agencies should encourage third world countries to enter into bilateral agreements with Member States in the area of the trafficking of narcotic drugs and psychotropic substances, and to address the question of extradition.

An urgent appeal is therefore made by the Government of Sierra Leone to UNDCP, all Member States and institutions possessing technical skills, logistics and financial means to assist it to participate fully in this concerted global war to combat the trafficking and abuse of narcotic drugs and psychotropic substances, which has been accentuated by the effect of seven years of rebel war and junta misrule that have totally destroyed the fabric of our society.

Permit me to take this opportunity on behalf of the President, the Government and the people of Sierra Leone, to express my sincere gratitude and appreciation to the United Nations, the Secretary-General, Member States and other international organizations for the unwavering support given to us in our quest for the restoration of democracy and constitutional order in our country.

The President: I thank the Minister for Internal Affairs and Local Administration of Sierra Leone for his statement.

I now give the floor to His Excellency The Honourable Chitalu Sampa, Minister of Defence of Zambia.

Mr. Sampa (Zambia): Marking the tenth anniversary of the adoption of the United Nations Convention against Illicit Traffic in Narcotic Drugs and Psychotropic Substances gives us an opportunity to assess our successes and identify the challenges we need to overcome in order for us to make serious headway towards a drug-free world. This, we believe, is an achievable goal. But we must all galvanize the political will to undertake the necessary action.

The implementation of the Declaration will require a comprehensive approach. It is the considered view of my delegation that the problem of drugs is a development matter which needs to be an integral part of all development policies. The reality of the world we live in today is that it would be unrealistic to try to deal with the world drug problem in isolation. It is also unproductive to engage in finger-pointing. It is a well-established fact that

organized criminal groups, particularly the drug lords and their illegal families, the cartels, are spreading their operations around the world.

We, the developing countries, have become their prime targets, especially in relation to their money-laundering activities. We are undertaking serious efforts to restructure our economies and are making every effort to attract much-needed private investment. In our genuine need to open up our economies, we may unwittingly have exposed ourselves to the evils of international crime, particularly money-laundering, because of our weak institutions and the fact that our justice systems are not yet sufficiently developed to prevent and control organized transnational crime.

The framework for international cooperation in combating the drug problem must therefore be widened to ensure assistance to Governments in drafting and implementing national drug-control laws and regulations. These should include training for law-enforcement personnel, judges, magistrates and prosecutors, as well as the provision of necessary technical expertise and equipment.

It is an indisputable fact that reducing the demand for drugs is key to solving the global drug problem. There is certainly a need for stronger demand reduction efforts that are community-based and include a wide umbrella of actors: parents, teachers and churches all need to get involved. The demand reduction programmes should cover all areas of prevention, from discouraging initial use to reducing the negative health and social consequences of drug abuse.

We also see an urgent need to focus demand reduction strategies on young people, who in our view need special attention. These programmes should be age-appropriate, relevant and accessible to these groups, which are most at risk, and they should as a matter of course take into account the different socio-economic factors.

Social deprivation and poverty in most parts of the world are breeding grounds for drug abuse. The sense of helplessness and isolation due to unfavourable social and economic factors makes people — especially young people — more vulnerable to drug abuse and drug-related risk-taking behaviour. These unfortunate people are also open to exploitation by drug lords.

I would like to take this opportunity to share with members the situation in Zambia in relation to the drug problem. Zambia has been used as a transit port for drugs coming from the Far East. It has unfortunately emerged as an important distribution point for illicit narcotic drugs and psychotropic substances. The geopolitical position of Zambia in the southern African region, and particularly the centrality of the Lusaka international airport, makes Zambia easily accessible to all of its neighbours both by air and by road networks.

The tragic result of this interaction is that today drug abuse, which was virtually unheard of in Zambia, is on the rise. A worrying percentage of our youth have become victims of drug and substance abuse. This new trend is also linked to the social and economic difficulties that the country is going through. In addition, some of our youth have been the victims of drug barons, who have recruited them as couriers. It is actually this exposure that has led to the consumption of drugs.

It is a declared policy of the Zambian Government to fight the scourge of drugs with utmost vigour through the work of its Drug Enforcement Commission. Our long-term strategy is aimed at preventing the use of drugs. We have identified the need to raise awareness of the dangers of drug abuse at the community level, especially in schools and colleges. Our experience has shown that community-wide participation and a partnership approach are crucial to the success of the programme. Collaboration among Government, non-governmental organizations, teachers, employers and the private sector is also essential. But it is of utmost importance that family responsibility be stressed. Parents and a stable family environment are indispensable in the war against drugs.

In addition to formulating a national drug control master plan which is in accordance with the United Nations Global Programme of Action, Zambia has already undertaken very specific measures to curb drug trafficking. First, we have ratified all United Nations conventions which deal with issues of the control of illicit narcotic drugs, including the 1988 United Nations Convention against the Illicit Traffic in Narcotic Drugs and Psychotropic Substances.

Secondly, we enacted the Narcotic Drugs and Psychotropic Substances Act No. 37 of 1993, whose provisions comply with the 1988 Convention. Stiffer penalties are prescribed under this law, in which trafficking in narcotic drugs carries a penalty of 25 years; there is no bail for drug offences under that act.

Thirdly, all drug offences are extraditable offences.

Fourthly, a drug enforcement officer or a police officer who commits a narcotic drug offence automatically receives twice the prescribed penalty. This is to ensure that our officers stay above board in drug interdiction efforts.

Fifthly, Zambia is currently preparing documentation for the ratification of the Southern Africa Development Community (SADC) protocol on cross-border trafficking within the subregion. This process will be completed before the summit of heads of State of SADC countries later this year.

Finally, my Government is also taking measures to fight the emerging incidences of money-laundering. An anti-money-laundering bill will be presented to the National Assembly for enactment into law when parliamentary business resumes in July this year. The Zambian Government fully supports the initiative taken by the United Nations with the global programme against money-laundering for 1997 to 1999, and we stand ready to participate in that programme.

On the emerging debate on whether or not to legalize the use of cannabis and other substances that are termed "soft" drugs, the position of the Zambian Government is that we are against legalizing cannabis or any other so-called soft drug, and will continue to prescribe stringent measures to deal with those who break the law on the prohibition of cannabis trafficking, possession or smoking. The Zambian position on this matter will remain consistent with the decision taken by the heads of national drug law enforcement agencies of Africa in April 1998 in Abuja, Nigeria, and the African position adopted in Nairobi, Kenya, which rejected arguments for the legalization of cannabis in Africa. We shall also support the southern region drug control programme approved by regional law enforcement experts meeting in Botswana early this year.

No one, and certainly no country, is immune to the devastating consequences of drug abuse and illicit trafficking. As we enter the twenty-first century, let all of us gathered here today resolve to truly commit our Governments to implement the strategies set out in the draft declaration before us. We can make a difference.

The President: I thank the Minister of Defence of Zambia for his statement.

I now give the floor to His Excellency Mr. Hussein Ali Haithem, Vice-Minister, Ministry of the Interior of Yemen.

Mr. Haithem (Yemen) (*interpretation from Arabic*): The delegation of Yemen is grateful to you, Sir, for your efforts in convening this special session to spur international cooperation in combating drugs. This session represents a turning point in bolstering and developing international relations with a view to confronting this frightening phenomenon, which is a source of fear and anxiety in every home and family in the world. The drugs problem is not a regional problem or a problem for any single country or people; it is a world-wide problem that persists, and that in a sense moves in step with each country's development and progress.

Hence, no State can be spared this dangerous epidemic. For example, in my country, the Yemen Arab Republic, we had few such problems before 1935. But, like every other country in the world, we are now the victim of drug problems. Now, traffickers frequently use our country as a transit point, which adds to the gravity of the situation. But in spite of its limited means, our country has been able to frustrate many attempts to transfer drugs through Yemen to other countries. As we know, drugs may be grown in one country, manufactured in another and transferred through a third, for consumption in yet another country.

No State, however wealthy, can hope to eliminate this phenomenon alone, which is why it is so critical to spur international cooperation in this field. My Government, which has ratified international conventions on combating drugs and psychotropic substances, has worked vigorously to bolster these agreements, within a legal framework. We have adopted a law on fighting narcotic drugs and psychotropic substances, which covers all illicit contacts relating to drugs and psychotropic substances, and which provides for penalties commensurate with the crimes specified in that law. Its annexes cover all illicit drugs, as designated on international lists.

On the technical side, we organize training courses for personnel working in this area. These courses take place both within Yemen and outside it. This reflects my country's interest in consolidating international cooperation and the ability to take action in this sphere.

We view this historic special session also as a starting point: a springboard in the struggle against drugs. We urgently appeal to all countries and to all international

organizations involved in combating drugs to close ranks and support countries, including my own, that lack the technical and material means to wage the struggle. Let us form a single front against the amoral gangs that lack human values and that have created this scourge.

This is a grave, multi-faceted and multilateral problem indeed, but we have the firm hope that we will leave this world forum having adopted practical programmes to eliminate this scourge world-wide.

The President: I thank the Vice-Minister, Ministry of the Interior of Yemen for his statement.

I now give the floor to His Excellency Mr. Maurice Randrianame, Director-General in charge of the Interministerial Campaign against Drugs of Madagascar.

Mr. Randrianame (Madagascar) (*interpretation from French*): The delegation of Madagascar welcomes the convening of this special session of the General Assembly, which is fresh proof of the determination of the international community to combat the many-faceted problem of drugs. This session coincides with the tenth anniversary of the adoption of the United Nations Convention against the Illicit Traffic in Narcotic Drugs and Psychotropic Substances of 1988, and provides a new opportunity to adopt innovative approaches that can meet both current challenges and those of the next millennium.

The scourge of the illicit traffic in drugs has become a global problem, and it can be eliminated only through international cooperation based on partnership and active solidarity. Accordingly, the Government of Madagascar wishes to pay tribute to the efforts of the United Nations carried out through its specialized agencies, including the United Nations International Drug Control Programme (UNDCP), and hopes that this special session will give fresh momentum to translating global strategies and policies into concrete action at the national, regional and international levels.

My Government welcomes this session also because it will reaffirm, in the draft political declaration before it, the determination of the international community — previously expressed at the International Conference on Drug Abuse and Illicit Trafficking, held at Vienna in June 1987, and at the seventeenth special session of the General Assembly, held at New York in February 1990 — vigorously to combat drug abuse, illicit drug trafficking and related activities, including money-laundering and corruption. This combat will be waged

individually at the national level, and in cooperation with other States at the regional and international levels, on the basis of shared responsibility. Indeed, there is no longer any distinction between producer countries and consumer countries: both are affected by the same problems. All States must therefore accede to the relevant legal instruments, which provide an ideal framework for cooperation.

Mindful that any effort to combat drugs will be condemned to failure without a sound organizational structure and a solid, appropriate legal environment, and faithful to its commitments, Madagascar has participated in international conferences and has maintained and strengthened its Interministerial Campaign against Drugs, which is responsible, *inter alia*, for coordinating anti-drug activities by governmental and non-governmental bodies, in a spirit of synergy and effectiveness. We have promoted cooperation with other countries and regional and international organizations.

Madagascar has harmonized its national legislation with the spirit and letter of the international conventions in force, by promulgating on 4 December 1997 a law on the control of narcotics, psychotropic substances and precursors; this was carried out with legal assistance from the United Nations International Drug Control Programme (UNDCP). This legislation was necessary to clamp down on the illicit traffic in drugs other than cannabis, which are beginning to make inroads in Madagascar. The law also enables us to prosecute those who in any way encourage others to consume controlled substances. Its therapeutic provisions permit the judge to substitute treatment for incarceration. Finally, the law makes it possible to place under control substances not under international controls that nonetheless pose a threat to individuals and society — such as *Catha edulis*, whose synthetic derivatives cathine and cathinone are, oddly enough, covered.

Since 1996, my Government has been engaged in talks with Council of Europe with a view to acceding to European convention on judicial cooperation, and the Convention on Laundering, Search, Seizure and Confiscation of the Proceeds from Crime. We recently requested the UNDCP to provide legal assistance in drafting a law on money-laundering. A similar initiative has been taken with respect to the Universal Postal Union on holding a training seminar for postal, customs and law enforcement agents, in view of the possible use of the postal service by traffickers.

In tandem with the adoption of the new legislation, and based on the framework drafted by the UNDCP, Madagascar has begun to prepare a national anti-drug plan focused principally on demand reduction. To that end, an epidemiological survey has been carried out with the assistance of the Institute for Training and Drug Control and of INSEM in Paris, to identify the real trends in drug abuse and, indirectly, in illicit trafficking as well as to identify the best target group for a prevention programme for young people.

One of the plan's objectives is the elimination of illicit cannabis crops. Operations carried out by our national police since June 1997 in the northern part of Madagascar, which is known to be one of the areas in which illicit crops are grown, discovered large illicit crops of cannabis extending over several dozens of hectares. The police destroyed scores of tons of cannabis and arrested hundreds of farmers involved in growing and production. This should be extended to other parts of the country, but that requires major financial resources. The regional representative of the UNDCP at Nairobi, Kenya, has been informed of this. These operations have definitely enabled us to remove from the illicit market large quantities of cannabis which would have done great harm to users.

Yet, without in any way condoning these illicit practices, I must note that families whose living conditions already leave much to be desired will suffer from this because of the loss of earnings that these operations entail. Pursuant to the principles of the humanistic and environmentally friendly republic we have established in Madagascar, about which our President spoke at length at his inauguration before the supreme court, our Government's major concern, with a view to reconciling individuals with their brethren — for, according to Hobbes in his *De Cive*, "Man to Man is an arrant Wolfe", "*homo homini lupus*," and, according to Jean-Jacques Rousseau in *Du Contrat social*, man is born good but society corrupts him — and with their environment, is the eradication of poverty. It is a fact that poor people are often prompted to commit reprehensible acts, even crimes, that in normal circumstances their conscience would condemn.

With this concern in mind, Madagascar's national anti-drug plan stresses, in the framework of integrated rural development, a programme of replacing illicit crops with other viable, profitable crops. But this programme requires considerable human and financial resources, for it is not enough to raise a crop: the substitute crop must

find its way from the farm to the market. This requires reliable, well-built roads that will make year-round transportation feasible.

The measures that Madagascar plans to implement at the national, regional and international levels in the context of its commitment to the fight against the scourge of drugs require human and financial resources that we hope to find through other States and through international governmental and non-governmental organizations — if the international cooperation in eradicating this scourge, of which we are constantly speaking here, is not an empty phrase. That cooperation must also include condemnation by the international community of all lax policies adopted by certain States, including the liberalization and decriminalization of any activity related to cannabis, and the distribution of drugs to addicts for any reason. Such policies could weaken the entire international anti-drug system and could consequently impede the cooperation for which that system is the only suitable framework.

The President: I thank the Director-General in charge of the Interministerial Campaign against Drugs of Madagascar for his statement.

I now give the floor to His Excellency Mr. Baboucarr-Blaise Jagne, chairman of the delegation of the Gambia.

Mr. Jagne (Gambia): Let me at the outset, on behalf of the Gambian delegation, convey our heartfelt condolences to the delegation of the Federal Republic of Nigeria on the untimely demise of the former head of State, General Sani Abacha. General Abacha contributed immensely to strengthening the excellent relations that have always existed between the sister republics of Nigeria and the Gambia. He also did a great deal to give concrete expression to the lofty ideals of pan-Africanism and, indeed, African solidarity and brotherhood. May his soul rest in perfect peace.

There could not have been a better forum in which to address the world drug problem than this special session. It is our fervent hope that through sustained, concerted international effort, our common goal of a drug-free world can be achieved. There is no need to emphasize the fact that the drug menace has already assumed monumental proportions, to such an extent that today no society is safe from its lethal and tenacious tentacles. Quite apart from the violence associated with drugs, the very fabric of society itself is destroyed in the process, and the most precious asset of any nation, young people, are always,

unfortunately, the first victims. As the young are the future of all nations, we all have a vested interest in protecting them. It should therefore be our common resolve to deal a death-blow to the drug problem in all its forms.

The first step in this regard is the adoption of the draft political declaration, which is also, in a way, our mission statement. We are confident that, with determination, the necessary political will and adequate resources, the job can be done in the long run, the dimensions of the challenge notwithstanding.

Let me take my own country as an example. We all know that many countries here present have been used as transit points by drug traffickers in their extensive networks. The Gambia was no exception to the rule, but since the advent of the new Government in July 1994 under the leadership of His Excellency President Yahya A. J. J. Jammeh and since his immediate declaration of war on drugs, the problem has been drastically reduced. The National Drug Squad established in 1991 has stepped up its activities, including airport and seaport reinforcement exercises, monitoring and information gathering, screening of suspects, identification, raids, arrests and conviction of pushers, dealers and traffickers. We could have done better with more resources but, all the same, we are hopeful that with the momentum generated by this special session we can count on the assistance and cooperation of other countries to help us with logistics, including training, and material support.

At this juncture, allow me to express my delegation's sincere appreciation of the timely offer made by President Clinton concerning the establishment of a fellowship programme that would enable officials from other countries to come to the United States for further training in the fight against drugs.

In addition to the Drug Squad mentioned earlier, a National Drug Control Programme has also been established in the Gambia, with two main objectives envisaged, namely to control the menace of drug trafficking and its associated problems and, secondly, to strengthen the existing institutions associated with the treatment of drug addicts. An integral part of our National Drug Control Programme is its drug control laboratory, where samples of seizures are analyzed. It was with the active support of the United Nations International Drug Control Programme (UNDCP) that the laboratory was set up primarily for the quality control of pharmaceuticals. But because of an acute shortage of

resources, we are compelled to try to kill two birds with one stone. My country is therefore most grateful to the UNDCP for their cooperation.

Nor must we forget the invaluable contribution of a number of non-governmental organizations. I am in our case referring to a local organization, the Youth Front Against Drugs and Alcohol, which has been working very hard not only to get young people away from drugs, but also to open more attractive outlets for them.

In conclusion, I would like, on behalf of my Government, to thank President Ernesto Zedillo of Mexico for the initiative taken to convene this special session devoted to the world drug problem. President Jammeh himself would have liked to attend this important meeting in person, but due to the Assembly of Heads of State and Government of the Organization of African Unity currently taking place in Ouagadougou, Burkina Faso, he could not come. Nonetheless, he will continue to follow this matter closely with undiminished interest and give the necessary directives to all those who are concerned with the fight against drugs in the Gambia for a coordinated and vigorous follow-up.

This special session will no doubt rekindle the interest that we all share in the fight against drugs. We all crave a drug-free world. It is a daunting task, to say the least, but we must take up the challenge because the stakes are so high that we cannot afford to be complacent.

The President: I thank the Chairman of the delegation of the Gambia for his statement.

I now give the floor to His Excellency Mr. Percy Metsing Mangoaela, Chairman of the delegation of Lesotho.

Mr. Mangoaela (Lesotho): It is a singular honour for me to address this twentieth special session of the General Assembly, on behalf of the recently elected Government of Lesotho, on a problem whose enormity is not in dispute. The problem of drug abuse and attendant social consequences poses a severe challenge to the resourcefulness of humankind to respond collectively to a common menace.

A sound and comprehensive framework for drug control activities was established in the existing international drug control treaties. The United Nations International Drug Control Programme (UNDCP) has been coordinating all drug control activities within the United

Nations system and has also been providing effective leadership in promoting international cooperation in drug control. The International Narcotics Control Board has been engaged in relentless efforts with Member States to ensure the comprehensive implementation of the provisions of the United Nations Convention against Illicit Traffic in Narcotic Drugs and Psychotropic Substances of 1988.

Some major events have taken place, including the International Conference on Drug Abuse and Illicit Trafficking, held in Vienna in June 1987, and the seventeenth special session of the General Assembly, held in 1990, which was devoted to international drug control issues and at which the Assembly adopted a Political Declaration and Global Programme of Action. The Assembly also proclaimed the 10-year period from 1991 to 2000 as the United Nations Decade against Drug Abuse.

Despite all these efforts and others aimed at drug control, all countries are now affected by the devastating consequences of drug abuse. In fact, the drug problem has bypassed national borders and has become a global threat. The drug scourge has become increasingly complex. The efforts of the international community to combat the escalating problem are undermined by the production of new drugs. The illicit use of and traffic in drugs continue to pose a serious threat to the health and welfare of our peoples and they also adversely affect the economic, cultural and political foundations of our societies. Profits made from illicit trafficking are being used to destabilize Governments, corrupt officials and influence Government decisions.

Lesotho is a party to the existing treaties on drug control, namely, the Single Convention on Narcotic Drugs of 1961 as amended by the 1972 Protocol, the Convention on Psychotropic Substances of 1971 and the United Nations Convention against Illicit Traffic in Narcotic Drugs and Psychotropic Substances of 1988. At this special session, the Government of Lesotho wishes to renew its commitment to give effect to the provisions of those Conventions. We also reaffirm our commitment to achieve concrete results on all the objectives set out by the relevant General Assembly resolutions.

The Government of Lesotho is concerned that, in all parts of the world, those who are mainly affected by the drug problem are children and youth. The age of initiation into drug abuse is falling almost every year. Article 33 of the Convention on the Rights of the Child,

to which 191 States are parties, emphasizes the need to protect children from abuse of narcotic drugs and psychotropic substances. Hence, at this special session, which marks the tenth anniversary of the 1988 Convention, my delegation reiterates that the participation of all nations, communities and families is essential if we are to successfully protect our children and win the fight against drugs.

It is disturbing to note that the extended family, which occupies a central position in African societies, is rapidly disintegrating due to factors such as poverty, drought, civil war and political and ethnic conflicts, which, in turn, lead to famine and massive displacement of populations. Unfortunately, the erosion of the African family structure has led to the drift towards drug abuse, especially among children and young people. We therefore call upon all members of the international community to address the problem of drugs in Africa, taking into account factors that contribute to the disintegration of the African family.

In this context, my delegation wishes to stress the importance of the participation of families in any given society in the fight against drugs. Families are the principal means for the transmission of values, culture, attitudes and patterns of behaviour. It is usually young people in especially difficult circumstances, such as street children, who are particularly vulnerable to drug abuse and drug-related risk-taking behaviour. We recall that the General Assembly, in its resolution 47/237 of 20 September 1993, proclaimed 15 May as the International Day of Families. We are convinced that the international community, by annual observance of this day, attaches great importance to families as basic units of society. However, we would still like to see the importance of the participation of families in the fight against drugs being highlighted at this session.

My delegation is very pleased that representatives from 130 Governments who attended the final preparatory session, which was held in Vienna from 16 to 21 March 1998, agreed to the Political Declaration proposed for adoption at this special session. The Declaration sets out a comprehensive global strategy designed to tackle simultaneously all aspects of the drug problem. It is also very important that target dates have been set. Lesotho also welcomes the provisions set out in the "Declaration on the Guiding Principles of Drug Demand Reduction", "Measures to promote judicial cooperation" and "Countering money-laundering".

My delegation cannot overemphasize the importance of the principle of shared responsibility for addressing the demand and supply aspects of drug-trafficking. We would therefore welcome an assessment of the international drug problem and the development of a forward-looking strategy for the twenty-first century centred on the basic principle of a balanced approach between supply and demand reduction and, in particular, with full respect for the sovereignty and territorial integrity of States, and non-intervention in internal affairs of States.

In Lesotho, although we cannot claim not to be affected by the scourge of drugs, we do not know the extent of drug abuse and trafficking in the country. What we do know is that cannabis is produced in the country, albeit in small quantities. It grows in the mountain regions with difficult road access. Most of the producers are the poorest of the rural poor. They often export their produce to neighbouring South Africa in order to earn money for their sustenance and their other economic needs. These people, who feed their families from the proceeds of their illegal produce, who get arrested by the police and serve long sentences in prison or who get mugged by criminals, are not criminals themselves. They are heads of families faced with abject poverty. We therefore agree that alternative development is the answer to these intractable problems.

Of equal concern to my Government is the link between illicit traffic in drugs and organized crime. The illicit drug trade is associated with illicit traffic in arms and with money-laundering. The Government of Lesotho has realized the prevalence of corruption in the country. Research undertaken with the assistance of the Danish Centre for Human Rights and the Governments of Botswana, South Africa and the United Kingdom has shown the incidence of economic crime to be on the increase in the country and to involve senior officials in the civil service and other Government institutions. The Government has also recognized that its control strategies cannot succeed without legislation against money-laundering, and is thus in the process of enacting such legislation. My delegation believes that the drug problem can be effectively dealt with only through international cooperation. We are therefore appreciative of the cooperation we have received from some of our neighbours, such as Botswana and South Africa, as well as from those farther afield, such as Denmark and the United Kingdom.

Finally, the Government of Lesotho wishes to express its appreciation for the contribution made by

UNDCP in the subregion. UNDCP has been involved in raising awareness and strengthening law enforcement to halt the flow of illegal drugs across national borders in the subregion. Just last month it funded a regional conference in Nairobi, Kenya, in which officials from 15 southern and eastern African countries participated. UNDCP's efforts are complementary to the initiatives taken by the Southern African Development Community (SADC), of which Lesotho is a member, to combat drug-trafficking within the Community. In this regard, SADC has adopted a Protocol on combating illicit drugs.

The challenge posed by the drug abuse problem is not for the faint-hearted, and the international community, when it decides to act in concert, has never been known to be faint-hearted. Such conviction underpins our faith in our collective capacity to rise to the challenge.

The President: I thank the Chairman of the delegation of Lesotho for his statement.

I give the floor to His Excellency Mr. William Bull, Chairman of the delegation of Liberia.

Mr. Bull (Liberia): Permit me at the outset, on behalf of my Government, to reiterate our heartfelt condolences to the Government and the people of the Federal Republic of Nigeria on the passing of General Sani Abacha. He was an outstanding son of Africa, and his passing is a tremendous loss to the subregion.

The Government of Liberia welcomes the convening of this twentieth special session of the General Assembly devoted to the world drug problem.

It is to be regretted that over the years the appeals from this rostrum and other international forums for concerted international action to address the drug problem have not received the support they deserve. Yet our participation in this session reflects a growing awareness of the complexity of the problem and the need to take global action to combat the illicit drug scourge, which is having a detrimental impact on millions of lives throughout our world.

A comprehensive approach to the drug problem must address both the demand and supply of drugs and the impact it has had on the socio-economic development and infrastructure of countries, particularly those of the developing world.

In this regard, our universal Organization is the best forum to sensitize people and help formulate measures to address the world drug problem. We pay a deserved tribute to Secretary-General Kofi Annan for his leadership and consistent efforts to focus attention on the urgent need for decisive action to reverse the present trend. We acknowledge the very important contributions of the United Nations International Drug Control Programme (UNDCP), under the capable leadership of Mr. Arlacchi, in helping mobilize international action and assistance to combat the drug problem.

In Africa, there is a growing recognition of the need to arrest the problems of drug abuse in order to prevent the diversion of scarce resources from socio-economic development to law enforcement and other measures to combat drug-trafficking. Thus, various forums, at both the regional and subregional levels, have been making concerted efforts at drug control. The plan of action of the Organization of African Unity, adopted in July 1996 by the Assembly of Heads of State and Government, established guidelines to ensure coherence of action in drug control at the national and regional levels. Many of the countries have also entered into bilateral and multilateral cooperation agreements aimed at drug control.

At the subregional level, the member States of the Economic Community of West African States have worked together since 1993 to implement a unified drug control programme aimed at the eradication of illicit drugs from their countries.

In the case of Liberia, which experienced seven years of war until last July, when democratic elections were held, the incidence of drug abuse had reached alarming proportions. In 1995, the then interim Administration established an Inter-Ministerial Drug Committee headed by an Executive Director. The Committee sought for the first time to formulate national programmes and policies for the prevention, treatment and rehabilitation of drug users. It also sought to harmonize policies with other countries in the subregion to stem drug-trafficking.

Upon taking office in August 1997, President Charles Taylor, in his first nationwide address, stressed his Government's determination to combat trafficking in illicit drugs and to prevent drug traffickers from using Liberian territory as a safe haven.

In collaboration with UNDCP, friendly Governments and other groups, the Liberian authorities have developed a two-year recovery plan, estimated to cost \$2 million, aimed at anti-drug sensitization of the population. This includes institutional capacity-building through training, seminars, mass media education, and radio and television programmes, among other things.

A strategy for the rehabilitation of ex-combatants who are drug addicts has been designed by the Government. The estimated cost for the implementation of this programme over a three-year period is \$3 million.

It is clear that in spite of the modest efforts of Liberia and other like-minded countries to institute national programmes and policies to combat illicit drug-trafficking and drug abuse, only concerted international action can reverse this trend. This is why my Government fully endorses the time-specific declarations and programmes which will be adopted at this special session.

In this connection, it is imperative that adequate support be given to the United Nations International Drug Control Programme and to countries such as Liberia, which lack the resources to fully implement national programmes aimed at combating the drug problem.

The Government of Liberia is committed to the global strategy to comprehensively address the drug problem confronting our world. It is our hope that the decisions reached here will send a clear message of the resolve of the international community to bring an end to this menace facing mankind.

The President: I thank the Chairman of the delegation of Liberia for his statement.

I give the floor to His Excellency Mr. Vladimír Galuška, Chairman of the delegation of the Czech Republic.

Mr. Galuška (Czech Republic): I do not think that anyone will be surprised when I start by saying that now, near the end of the twentieth century, drugs are one of the major problems of our planet. They affect political institutions as well as the social welfare, health and security of populations in virtually all countries of the world. This supranational phenomenon, which transcends the boundaries of States, regions and geopolitical areas, is a typical global issue that can be addressed only by sustained international cooperation. The Czech Republic is convinced that the necessary prerequisite for an effective

anti-drug action, on the domestic and international level, is the political will of each State concerned. The ratification and implementation of the three international drug control Conventions of 1961, 1971 and 1988 is an indispensable precondition for an effective fight against drugs.

For the Czech Republic, the main purpose of this special session is to strengthen those Conventions, which the international community considers to be basic legal instruments, by adopting the recommendations contained in the report of the Commission on Narcotic Drugs (A/S-20/4). The draft Political Declaration, reflecting the world community's awareness of the variety of drug problems, strengthens its effort to reach concrete targets and for the first time in history sets the dates for implementation.

The Czech Republic greatly appreciates the Declaration on the Guiding Principles of Drug Demand Reduction. We fully agree with the idea that demand reduction programmes must cover all preventive measures — those intended to deter young people from using drugs as well as those designed to minimize the damaging health and social impact of drug abuse. The Czech Republic considers that the texts prepared for this session offer a good basis for enhanced international cooperation and believes that we will soon reach a consensus on their adoption.

Not to dwell on formal proclamations, I will now cite several examples of the Czech Republic's resolve to confront the growing drug problem. This February, the Government approved a new anti-drug strategy for the years 1998-2000, introducing an integrated and balanced approach that is in keeping with the Action Programme adopted by the United Nations General Assembly. A balanced approach to demand and supply reduction is the key to effective drug control. This strategy is applied at two basic levels: the central level and the local community level. This decentralized system delegates responsibility to district anti-drug coordinators. Our experience has shown that involvement of the local community in drug control projects is of vital importance.

Over the last three years, the Czech Republic has introduced many laws which are fully consistent with the relevant United Nations conventions and the European Union *acquis*. The most important ones are: the law against money-laundering; the amendment to the criminal code declaring possession of drugs for personal use a

criminal act; and a law regulating verification of the legitimate end-use of narcotic and psychotropic substances, including precursors. The main thrust of the Czech Republic's anti-drug strategy is to broaden and strengthen existing cooperation at the subregional and regional level. In this process we appreciate the role of the United Nations International Drug Control Programme (UNDCP), which remains the main coordinating body for the efforts of the world community in the implementation of its far-reaching goals.

It is not necessary to graduate with a degree in economics to notice that in today's world, drugs also represent an economic problem. It is alarming that the international drug trade now accounts for up to 5 per cent of world trade, and that the profits from organized crime have reached hundreds of millions of United States dollars. The overall price which the world's population has to pay is overwhelming and perhaps disproportionate to the energy invested in drug-control action. It is alarming also that the AIDS epidemic, spreading within the community of drug addicts, has grown into a major public-health risk which already has had, or in the near future will have, a ruinous effect on national budgets.

Drugs are clearly a chronic problem of the modern world. Some say that the underlying cause is the new social context, or the specific biological and psychological inclination of drug addicts. However, with realistic goals and a balanced, coordinated approach, there is hope that we will bring this growing problem under control. Sustained international cooperation is necessary, as no country will be able to overcome this problem alone. I think that this session is not only an exceptional opportunity to reaffirm our determination to honour international drug control commitments but also a chance for the international community to take at least a small step towards solving this major problem.

Let me conclude by saying that the tasks we are facing are difficult but clearly and realistically stated. It is now up to Member States as to whether, to what extent, and how quickly we will accomplish them. Clearly, the results of our joint effort will shape the face of the world on the threshold of the next millennium.

The President: I thank the Chairman of the delegation of the Czech Republic for his statement.

I now give the floor to Mr. Mohammed Al-Sameen, Chargé d'affaires of Oman.

Mr. Al-Sameen (Oman) (*interpretation from Arabic*): I should like first of all to express to you, Sir, on behalf of the delegation of my country, our warm thanks for your excellent organization of the work of this session. I should like also to express my appreciation for the work of the Executive Director of the United Nations International Drug Control Programme (UNDCP) for the successful preparation of the work of the session.

The General Assembly has convened at this special session to consider an issue of great importance to the international community. This international manifestation and consideration of the drug problem and the problem of illicit drug trafficking is yet further proof of the importance attached by the international community to eliminating this dangerous transnational scourge. It is certain that the scourge of drugs affects all peoples and that it is a catastrophe for societies.

Through the damage it inflicts on the development strategies of countries — not to speak of the resulting threats to international peace and security — international cooperation to face the threat of drugs and of illicit drug trafficking is an absolute necessity which imposes on us the need for coordinated efforts to achieve tangible results aimed at eliminating this problem in all its dimensions.

The international conventions and relevant resolutions adopted by the international community have greatly contributed to promoting efforts to fight this scourge. Now more than ever it is up to us to implement these conventions and promote them through mechanisms that can succeed.

My country hails the international efforts to combat drugs and all related activities. My country would also like to state once again its firm commitment to joint cooperation to eradicate this phenomenon. This is because we are fully aware of the danger of drugs and their negative impact on the health and prosperity of humanity throughout the world. My country's Government is convinced of the importance of promoting international efforts in this framework. We have therefore participated with the international community in the elaboration of effective solutions to remedy the problems of drug abuse and illicit drug traffic. Consequently, my country has worked to promulgate strict national laws to address this phenomenon and contain it. In addition, my country's Government has established a specialized body to combat drugs, carry out training, and, develop and

promote scientific research efforts and studies aimed at addressing and resolving this problem.

We wish to reiterate the importance of the role of international action in combating drugs. Therefore we stress the importance of shared responsibility, which should be applied on a firm and integrated basis, keeping in view the principle of respect of national sovereignty and territorial integrity of countries and of non-interference in their affairs. On this basis my country has acceded to all the international conventions and protocols on the fight against drugs. Furthermore there is joint cooperation among all of our national agencies and bodies and the International Criminal Police Organization (Interpol) in this context.

On the regional level, my country has participated in the elaboration of the draft of the unified law on drug crimes of the Gulf Cooperation Council. My country also participated in the formulation of the Arab strategy to fight drug abuse. In addition, it has also cooperated with the Arab Office to Fight Narcotic Drugs of the Council of Arab Ministers of the Interior.

Finally, my country is pleased with the recommendations of the preparatory body for the session. We would also like to reiterate the importance we attach to action in the context of a new partnership to apply the principle of shared responsibility and promote the legal framework. This is in addition to emphasizing the importance of coordinating efforts among countries to adopt legislation aiming at implementing an international strategy. These efforts will be insufficient unless they are harmonized with actions to reduce supply from the producer countries. This should be accompanied by energetic efforts to reduce the demand for drugs, including the so-called soft or sweet drugs.

We should also not overlook the need to forfeit the funds generated by illicit drug trafficking and to prevent money-laundering. We need a mechanism for the strengthening of cooperation among States through the exchange of information in the context of the anti-drug struggle.

The President: I thank the Chairman of the delegation of Oman for his statement.

Before I begin calling on Observers, I should like to thank the representatives of Yemen, the Gambia and the Czech Republic, whose statements did not exceed six minutes, for their compliance with the decision of the

General Assembly that statements would be limited to seven minutes. Everyone knows how difficult it is to make a short statement.

I now give the floor to Her Excellency Mrs. Ruth Dreifuss, Federal Councillor and Vice-President of the Swiss Confederation.

Mrs. Dreifuss (Switzerland) (*interpretation from French*): By devoting its deliberations to the fight against the illicit production, sale, demand, traffic and distribution of narcotic drugs and psychotropic substances, the General Assembly is echoing the concerns of the international community.

No society is today spared by drug abuse and the traffic in illicit drugs. A distinction between producer and consumer countries can no longer be made. Given this trend, the international community must assume a shared responsibility and adopt a common strategy. My country supports the efforts made in recent years by the United Nations International Drug Control Programme to strengthen international cooperation and to develop multidisciplinary strategies at the national level.

Switzerland has formulated and implemented an enhanced drug strategy because of 1980s phenomena such as the AIDS epidemic, an increase in the number of drug users, the marginalization and obvious desperation of drug addicts, and an increase in the use of drugs in public places and in drug-related crime. Given the magnitude of these problems and aware of the fact that there is no single solution to resolve them, the Government of Switzerland has opted for a pragmatic, coherent policy to reduce drug addiction and its negative consequences, and to combat organized crime. That policy consists of a global, multidisciplinary approach based on four principles that promote confidence and cooperation among all players: prevention, treatment, risk reduction and suppression.

The first principle is prevention, to which we attach a high priority, as does the Declaration on the Guiding Principles of Demand Reduction. This initiative requires a long-term commitment to young people because they are increasingly confronted with the opportunity to use illicit drugs. Prevention activities are essential within all social structures - in the family, in schools, in the area of leisure and sports, and so on.

The second main principle is the treatment and social rehabilitation of dependent persons, where it is

essential to offer a broad range of care. It was to take into account particularly severe dependency cases that did not respond to other therapeutic methods that Switzerland, began in 1994 to carry out scientific studies involving the medical prescription of narcotics to severely dependent persons. These studies are just a very small component of the treatment measures that are used in my country. The prescription, under strict State control, of heroin, morphine and intravenous methadone, is but one element in a broader medical and social care programme.

I wish to repeat this loud and clear here: Switzerland is not moving towards drug liberalization — quite the contrary. Heroin remains a banned substance in Switzerland and can be prescribed only in specialized institutions, with special authorization from the Confederation.

These studies have elicited great and often very critical interest. Switzerland wants to act very openly and will make available the scientific results of these trials to all interested persons. Our country has received several foreign delegations and is happy to continue to provide information about its approach.

The results of these trials indicate that the medical prescription of narcotics makes it possible to treat severely dependent drug addicts who have already tried other forms of treatment without success. Their state of health and social situation have improved considerably. Criminal activity among these persons is decreasing sharply. However, withdrawal requires a relatively long period of time.

The prescription of heroin to severely dependent drug addicts within the framework of a well-developed health system, such as my country's, has proved to be an interesting possible complement to the various forms of drug dependence treatments. We stress that many conditions have to be fulfilled in order to ensure that this form of treatment does not do more harm than good.

The third basic principle involves risk-reduction and survival measures for drug-dependent persons during the active phase of their addiction to drugs in order to prevent their physical and psychological deterioration, or even their deaths. Needle-exchange programmes, for example, seek to reduce the risk of transmitting AIDS or hepatitis.

Finally, the fourth basic principle involves suppressing the illicit production, sale and consumption of drugs, as well as the money-laundering that stems from these

activities. With regard to the police, the Confederation has strengthened its coordination and intelligence in recent years, at both the national and international levels. Accordingly, Switzerland set up this spring a specialized unit that serves as a communications centre on money-laundering. This is one of the direct consequences of the entry into force on 1 April of the new law on money-laundering.

Likewise, the Confederation has increased its efforts to control the production of psychotropic substances, precursors and essential chemicals. Switzerland, which is a major producer of chemicals, is aware of its responsibility. It is through the effective control of primary chemicals and a relentless struggle against money-laundering that Switzerland intends to reach an important stage in the fight against organized crime.

The drug policy of the Swiss Government was debated at length last autumn. In a vote on 28 September, the people of Switzerland rejected by an overwhelming majority of 70 per cent the proposals of those who championed a more traditional and narrower approach. This result gives a very strong democratic legitimacy to the Government's drug policy.

The success of any drug policy is measured by facts. Allow me, in conclusion, to recall briefly some encouraging signs that have emerged in Switzerland. The number of drug-related deaths has decreased steadily. The number of new cases of HIV and hepatitis infection has also decreased dramatically. The number of new hard-drug users in Switzerland is decreasing, and the number of regular drug users has remained stable since 1990. The average age of drug addicts is rising. Most drug addicts eventually succeed in breaking their dependency. Finally, illicit drug seizures doubled between 1995 and 1996, while confiscations of drug-related money quadrupled last year.

I should also like to reaffirm here Switzerland's solidarity with international efforts to combat drugs. My country recognizes the importance of international coordination in the area of drug addiction because illicit-drug related problems cannot be solved within a single country. International cooperation and coordination are essential. The three days that we have spent here together will make it possible for us to strengthen them.

The President: I thank the Federal Councillor and Vice-President of the Swiss Confederation for her statement.

I now give the floor to His Excellency Archbishop Javier Lozano Barragán, President of the Pontifical Council for Pastoral Assistance to Health Care Workers of the Holy See.

Archbishop Lozano Barragán (Holy See)
(interpretation from Spanish): I bring the greetings of Pope John Paul II, who strongly supports our work in the struggle against drug abuse. The Holy See fully supports the fight against illegal drug traffic.

Some of the leading causes of drug use among young people and adults are the lack of clear, convincing motivations in life, the absence of values, the conviction that life is not worth living, a sense of loneliness and inability to communicate, the lack of a close relationship with God, the lack of strong human and spiritual principles, escapism in order to forget and an unsatisfying social structure based on a materialistic and destructive view of human needs. The pursuit of money takes possession of the hearts of many people, and by way of the drug trade turns them into traffickers in the freedom of their brothers and sisters. This pursuit becomes entangled with major economic and even political interests.

Drug abuse is totally incompatible with the basic principles of dignity and human coexistence. Those who traffic in drugs are merchants of death who assault mankind with the deceit of false freedoms and prospects for happiness in a nefarious form of commerce.

As for liberalization, it must be remembered that drugs are not overcome with drugs; drugs are an evil, and concessions should not be made to evils. Experience has shown that liberalization is not a solution, but a surrender. The distinction between hard and soft drugs leads into a blind alley. Drug addiction is not a question of drugs, but of what motivates an individual to take them.

To remedy this scourge, we suggest three courses: prevention, suppression and recovery. With respect to prevention, we must restore the human values of love and life, the only ones able to give full meaning to existence, especially when they are illuminated by religious faith. It is incumbent on public institutions to insist on a serious policy that aims to correct situations of personal and social disorder, among which the crisis of the family, unemployment among young people, housing problems, the lack of social and medical services and the shortcomings of the school system stand out as prime considerations. A serene conviction concerning the immortality of the soul,

future resurrection and eternal responsibility for one's actions is the surest method for such prevention.

As for suppression, it is a necessary element, but not a sufficient one by itself. The international commercial and financial structure of the drug trade must be combated. A solid front must be created that is committed to denouncing and legally prosecuting the merchants of death and eliminating the networks of social and moral disintegration. The expansion of the market in addictive substances must be effectively checked. The interests of those speculating in this market must be brought to light. The instruments and mechanisms they employ must be identified so as to proceed to dismantle them in a coordinated and effective fashion.

I would like to quote Pope John Paul II, who said:

"My fervent exhortation and admiration ... for the heads of Government and citizens [who] have endeavoured to combat the production, sale and abuse of drugs, perhaps paying a very high price, even sacrificing their physical integrity ... I invite civil authorities, those with economic decision-making power and everyone with social responsibilities to continue and intensify their efforts to perfect legislation at all levels for the fight against the different kinds of drug addiction and to oppose all the forms of the drug culture and of drug traffic."

As regards recovery, it is necessary to know the individuals who take drugs, understand their inner world, lead them to discover or rediscover their own dignity and help them as active participants to bring about the re-emergence and growth of the personal resources that drugs have buried. This should be done by way of a confident reanimation of the will towards noble, stable ideals. The fear of the future and of commitments to adult life that is observed in young people today makes them particularly fragile. They have a tendency to withdraw into themselves. The forces of death push them to give in to drugs and violence, and sometimes even to suicide. Behind what might appear to be a fascination with destruction we find a call for help from these young people and a deep thirst for life that needs to be understood so that the world will know how to radically modify points of view and ways of life.

Young people who have overcome drugs represent hope and bear witness to the fact that victory is possible. To a society concerned about the drug phenomenon, they

constitute a new impetus for continuing the battle and committing all our energies and goodwill. Many types of action are needed to combat drug abuse effectively, but there is one central action without which nothing can be achieved: to restore fully the conviction of the transcendent, unique value of man and his responsibility for free self-fulfilment.

The President: I thank the President of the Pontifical Council for Pastoral Assistance to Health Care Workers of the Holy See for his statement.

I now give the floor to Mr. Manuel Marín, Vice-President of the European Commission.

Mr. Marín (European Commission) (*interpretation from Spanish*): These 15 months of intensive and fruitful work have demonstrated the international community's interest in and concern about the very complex issue of the fight against drugs.

If one concept could summarize the spirit of this special session, it would be that of shared responsibility. The seriousness and international dimensions of the fight against drugs make everyone's cooperation necessary. There are no easy solutions, nor is there room for unilateral measures: the problems are shared and their solution must be as well.

The attitude of the international community and public opinion with regard to the fight against drugs has come a long way. Today, the simplistic and artificial distinction between consuming and producing countries has lost all credibility. Moreover, all countries are affected by the same problems directly associated with drug-trafficking, such as money-laundering and the diversion of chemical precursors. Because the challenge is global, an essential component of this shared responsibility is the focus on multilateral approaches, of which this special session is a telling example.

In addition, the fact that the problems of drug production and consumption can be solved only by reducing economic and social marginalization is a fundamental element that must not be forgotten and that must guide international action. It must therefore be addressed as one of the social and economic dimensions of sustainable development. Likewise, we will not be able to put a stop to the cultivation of narcotic drugs without helping to ensure viable livelihoods for rural communities in developing countries, which often lack other economic alternatives.

Allow me to say a few words now about the European Community's strategy. We are fighting against three scourges. We are fighting against poverty and the hopelessness that it engenders, which gives rise to drug consumption and trafficking; we are fighting against drugs, which destroy homes and communities; and we are fighting against crime, which finds in drug-trafficking a vast and fertile terrain. We seek to strike a reasonable balance between the control of supply and the reduction of demand. We are fighting against social and health problems associated with drugs and the criminality they generate.

This strategy is embodied in a number of initiatives and approaches. First, the European Community is putting its own house in order, through policies for growth and job creation, through its fight against social exclusion, through the prevention of drug addiction and through its global action plan against drugs, which allows us to react quickly to new trends in drug production and consumption. This is important with regard to synthetic drugs, for which we have set up an early warning system that allows us to respond effectively to rapid changes in the design and use of these drugs. In this effort we are relying on the valuable expertise of the European Monitoring Centre for Drugs and Drug Addiction. The European Union is ready to share its experience in this regard.

Secondly, in its actions abroad the European Community is a staunch supporter of both regional and multilateral approaches. In this regard, we support the agencies of the United Nations, particularly the United Nations International Drug Control Programme, as a centre of expertise.

Thirdly, we are helping strengthen our fight against the scourge of drugs through our political dialogue and other external policies with third countries. This political dialogue is particularly important in connection with the countries of Central and Eastern Europe, which are both producing and transit countries and also have a serious problem with synthetic drugs. The European Community's agreements with these countries were the first to include a drug clause. We are making considerable efforts to help them harmonize their laws and policies with ours and consolidate their civil societies, with a view to their future accession to the European Union.

Another result of political dialogue are the agreements to prevent the diversion of chemical

precursors that we have signed with the United States and other countries.

One fruit of our dialogue with Central America and Andean countries has been the establishment of a special drug regime within our Generalized System of Preferences. In this manner, we have encouraged and are encouraging the diversification of their economies away from drug cultivation. In addition, we support alternative development efforts, such as the successful Chapare project in Bolivia.

I also wish to emphasize the growing attention given to drugs in our dialogue with Asian and African countries and with the Caribbean. The Action Plan for the latter region will strengthen maritime cooperation and the fight against money laundering, which is essential to reduce drug trafficking.

Let us not forget that, however, as important as international cooperation is, the individual efforts of every nation to mainstream drug concerns into its social and economic policies are equally crucial.

Let me conclude by highlighting the strong support of the European Community for the Political Declaration and all its accompanying documents. In particular, we subscribe to all commitments relating to matters of Community competence.

The President: I thank the Vice-President of the European Commission for his statement.

I now give the floor to Mr. Raymond E. Kendall, Secretary-General of the International Criminal Police Organization.

Mr. Kendall (International Criminal Police Organization): Ten years have elapsed since we met in Vienna to finalize and adopt the 1988 United Nations Convention against the Illicit Traffic in Narcotic Drugs and Psychotropic Substances. It was a major step forward in international diplomacy and focused the attention of the entire world community on the global plague of drug trafficking and abuse. Now, 10 years later, it is only fitting that we use this special session to take stock of what we have accomplished since then, individually and collectively, in controlling this scourge.

The organization which I represent is an international intergovernmental body, the main objective of which is to ensure and promote the widest possible mutual assistance between all criminal police authorities within the limits of

the laws existing in the different countries and in the spirit of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. This year, the International Criminal Police Organization (Interpol) is marking its seventy-fifth year of providing such assistance to its member countries.

The organization has assisted its member countries, from its inception, in combating all aspects of international crime, but it is in the fight against drug trafficking that this organization has played a leading role and invested the greater part of its resources. Our first resolution against drug trafficking was adopted in Berlin in 1926 and advocated central drug services to exchange information. It is interesting to see how much progress has been made since then.

Realizing that a modern communications system is essential to effective international cooperation, we have spent during the last 10 years over \$20 million to ensure that our 177 member countries have the services at their disposal necessary to conduct investigations outside their normal jurisdiction and across borders. This system allows for the transmission of textual messages and also enables law enforcement services to instantly transmit photographs and fingerprints essential in identifying suspects and criminals operating internationally.

We are perhaps the only international organization which has the capability of transmitting criminal information to the law enforcement agencies of 177 countries in a rapid and secure way. Last year, about two million criminal messages were exchanged through the network, about 50 per cent of which were related to drug offences. As a result of the criminal information exchange, thousands of traffickers have been arrested and tons of illicit drugs have been seized.

In addition to communications, another requirement for successful transnational organized crime investigations is intelligence. Only when criminal intelligence is assembled in one place or one database and then systematically analyzed can the relationships, hierarchy and membership of organized criminal groups be identified and eventually immobilized. In a special operation conducted by us over the past two years, a major trafficking organization operating in virtually every region of the world was unmasked and many of its members were arrested. The organization specialized in smuggling drugs through the international postal service. The method facilitated the smuggling of hundreds of kilograms of cocaine and heroin across the globe. Through a systematic analysis of thousands of drug

records, we were able to identify several key members of the trafficking organization, who were subsequently arrested.

In our efforts to provide an appropriate response to the drug problem, we have always attached great importance to the need for close cooperation with other international and regional organizations concerned by the same problem.

A special working relationship with the United Nations Economic and Social Council Commission on Narcotic Drugs was established in 1948. Since then, we have attended all its meetings as observers. This special long-standing relationship was formally recognized in October 1996, when we were granted observer status to this Assembly. In accordance with both the spirit and the letter of various resolutions, there has been an unprecedented increase in the level of cooperation between Interpol and the Economic and Social Council, together with other United Nations bodies. We have also developed cooperation with other international and regional bodies.

I would like to say that, although law enforcement is the *raison d'être* of Interpol, we do not consider it as a panacea for all ills associated with the drug problem. The problem is too complex and needs to be addressed in social, medical and educational terms, as well as in terms of law enforcement, which means that, for us, the subject of demand reduction is particularly important.

We are adamantly opposed to any form of legalization of drugs, which would confer the status of legitimacy to illicit drugs or their abuse. On the other hand, we are entirely supportive of the notion of providing, as an alternative to punishment, the treatment, rehabilitation and social reintegration of drug-abusing offenders, as is recommended in the Guiding Principles of Drug Demand Reduction in the papers which were prepared for this meeting. Such a multifaceted approach is likely to wean the drug users away from crime, disease and misery, ensure better deployment of scarce resources, and give us, the law enforcement authorities, a reasonable chance to deal with the drug barons and their illicit activities by concentrating on the distribution networks, down to street level.

Many speakers have referred to commitment and political will over the past three days. Whilst I am greatly encouraged by such statements, we in law enforcement have noted that there is often a considerable delay in translating words into effective policies and action programmes. There are many examples which I would

quote, such as the recommendations arising from the Lyons meeting of the G7 group of nations concerning transnational crime. Many have yet to be implemented. How many countries have signed and ratified the 1988 Convention and still not created the appropriate domestic legislation? The Convention was adopted 10 years ago — how long does it take? There are police forces and customs units which are ill-equipped and ill-trained and receive little or no pay. This is not a mark of efficiency — it is an open invitation to corrupt practices.

As the main voice of law enforcement in this General Assembly, I would call upon the representatives of the nations of the world gathered here today to act in the principle of the Action Plan that is being proposed, with date limits to ensure that the action takes place in appropriate conditions and in the appropriate time. I believe that the time for a truly action-oriented approach has arrived and gives us the opportunity to begin again, perhaps with some new motivation.

The President: I thank the Secretary-General of the International Criminal Police Organization for his statement.

I now give the floor to His Excellency Mr. Mokhtar Lamani, Permanent Observer of the Organization of the Islamic Conference.

Mr. Lamani (Organization of the Islamic Conference) (*interpretation from French*): It is an honour and a pleasure for me to address this Assembly on behalf of the Organization of the Islamic Conference (OIC). Allow me at the outset to convey the greetings and best wishes for success of Mr. Azeddine Laraki, Secretary-General of the OIC, as well as his regret at being unable to attend this important session of the General Assembly.

We must first welcome the unity and solidarity shown by the Members of the United Nations in confronting the scourge of drugs. The massive presence of member countries of the OIC and, especially, their level of representation bear witness to the importance that our Organization attaches to this problem and its harmful effects upon socio-economic progress, family structures, and all the dimensions of our modern society.

The OIC has always placed this important question amongst its key concerns, as can be seen in the various resolutions adopted by the organization at the summit and ministerial conference levels. Thus, in 1988, the OIC organized a meeting of experts in Istanbul to address the

use, production, illegal processing and sale of psychotropic substances. The group of experts proposed measures aimed at countering this scourge. Those measures are essentially inspired by the provisions of the three international Conventions on drugs: the Single Convention on Narcotic Drugs of 1961, the Convention on Psychotropic Substances of 1971 and the United Nations Convention against the Illicit Traffic in Narcotic Drugs and Psychotropic Substances of 1988.

The development of modern techniques and the globalization of the world economy have set a new challenge in the struggle against this growing scourge because it is no longer possible for any single country to control this phenomenon. It can be effectively fought only by strengthening cooperation and the shared utilization of technological and human resources that only the United Nations and regional organizations can bring together.

That is why our organization favours a global approach to this question, an integrated international approach that takes into account all aspects, including the socio-economic, of the question.

The documents submitted to this session deserve our keen attention. The shortfalls in the financing of the United Nations International Drug Control Programme must be corrected. However, we welcome the work done by the Office for Drug Control and Crime Prevention under the leadership of its Executive Director, Mr. Pino Arlacchi. We support strengthening law enforcement legislation against money laundering, as well as the proposal of the Commission on Narcotic Drugs that certain international financial institutions should take bolder steps to incorporate the drug dimension into their development programmes.

The countries that constitute the largest markets for narcotics need to strengthen their presence in United Nations machinery and in their assistance to and cooperation with the South. Assistance in this area should target not only law enforcement machinery — the judiciary, customs and police — but also the banking sector, in order to curb money laundering linked to drug trafficking.

The machinery of the United Nations and of regional and national groups are the appropriate frameworks for facing this issue. Our organization will spare no effort to participate actively in all forms of information exchange and multilateral arrangements aimed at developing technical assistance programmes to respond to the complexity of this phenomenon and to fight this scourge.

The abuse of and illegal traffic in drugs have devastating effects on our States and societies. They encourage the rise of crime, violence and corruption. They severely drain human, natural and financial resources that could otherwise be used for economic and social development.

One new aspect of this trend is that it has spread to countries that lack the means to combat it and are thus the ideal targets of the drug multinational. The weakness of State machinery, civil wars and the disorganization of traditional structures are elements that make international drug crimes difficult to combat. The sales figures of this traffic are sometimes literally mind-boggling in comparison with the budgets of many developing countries.

That is why we welcome the options discussed by the international forums and regional arrangements aimed at attacking the phenomenon at various stages. The programmes should cover prevention as well as consumption. They should seek to promote judicial cooperation, to strengthen the fight against money laundering and to develop viable alternatives in order to eliminate the planting of drug crops by promoting replacement crops.

On the eve of the twenty-first century, we are entitled to believe in the firm resolve of the international community to give shape to the common will to eradicate this scourge forever.

The President: I thank the Permanent Observer of the Organization of the Islamic Conference for his statement.

I now give the floor to His Excellency Mr. Ahmed Bin Mohamed Al-Salem, Secretary-General, Arab Interior Ministers' Council, League of Arab States.

Mr. Al-Salem (League of Arab States) (*interpretation from Arabic*): At the outset, I am pleased to extend my sincere thanks to the Secretary-General of the United Nations for his kind invitation to the Arab Interior Ministers' Council to attend this special session of the General Assembly devoted to countering the drug problem, which harms the souls and bodies of millions of people, tears at the fabric of societies and countless families and brings many tragedies and lots of pain to humanity as a whole.

I am also pleased to convey the greetings of His Royal Highness, Prince Nayif ibn 'Abd al-'Aziz Al Sa'ud, the Interior Minister of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia and Honorary President of the Arab Interior Ministers' Council. His colleagues, Their Royal Highnesses and Excellencies, the Arab Interior Ministers, assure this Assembly of their absolute and sincere support for any international effort to curb and stem this phenomenon and limit its negative human and material impacts on mankind.

The Arab Interior Ministers' Council, established in 1982, is a regional security body in which all Arab countries are members. Its main objective is to develop cooperative and coordination efforts among its member States in the fields of internal security and crime control. In this context, the Council seeks to promote the security and safety of the individual in the Arab homeland, protecting his rights and properties regardless of his nationality, religious beliefs or ethnic background.

In order to achieve this noble goal, the Arab Interior Ministers' Council has designed many strategies, plans and programmes in the brief period since its inception. A close look at the agenda of this session will show that our Council has already addressed many questions included on it through the implementation of the items and components of the Arab Strategy against the illicit use of narcotic drugs and psychotropic substances, adopted by the Council in 1986.

The Strategy is aimed at tackling the drug problem in its various dimensions and trends and at the local, regional and international levels.

At the national level, each Arab country has established a specialized drug-control unit, while many have high-level national committees for the same purpose. The member States seek to enhance the efficiency and performance of the staff working in drug-control units, who benefit from training courses and scientific seminars and symposiums held in this field, which are organized by the Naif Arab Academy for Security Studies, the scientific organ of the Arab Interior Ministers' Council. In some Arab countries, private volunteer associations have been established to promote awareness of the harmful effects of drugs. Specialized treatment clinics and rehabilitation and social integration centres, have been set up.

Arab members of our Council and the Arab Security Information Office affiliated with our secretariat wage anti-drug media campaigns in order to prevent our children from falling victim to drugs. We consider the addict to be

a patient in need of treatment, rehabilitation and corrective measures.

Local measures against drugs cannot bear fruit unless they are accompanied by policies and action at the regional and international levels. We in the Arab countries are well aware of this. In the context of promoting regional Arab cooperation, many countries have reviewed and developed their national legislation and drug laws in the light of new international developments, guided by the unified model Arab drug law previously adopted by our Council.

On the other hand, the Arab Convention against the illicit use and traffic in narcotic drugs and psychotropic substances, adopted by the Council in 1994, is an effective legal coordination tool among our Arab countries in combating this phenomenon. To promote procedural and technical cooperation among the member States, the heads of the national drug-law enforcement agencies in the Arab homeland meet annually under the umbrella of our secretariat. Our twelfth conference was held a few days ago in Tunisia. Our specialized office for drug affairs also periodically reviews the unified Arab blacklist of traffickers in narcotic drugs and psychotropic substances. It also defines and modifies the unified Arab schedule of drug substances, under international control, and prepares the quarterly and annual statistical reports on the volume and dimensions of the drug phenomenon in the Arab world.

As for Arab international cooperation, the Council encourages and calls upon Arab States to promote cooperation and coordination with other countries in order to combat this phenomenon collectively and effectively. The outcome of this cooperation has been 15 bilateral and multilateral agreements among the Arab countries and between them and others, as well as the accession of 17 Arab countries to the Convention on Psychotropic Substances of 1971 and the ratification by 13 Arab States of the United Nations Convention against Illicit Traffic in Narcotic Drugs and Psychotropic Substances of 1988.

While we seek today to enhance regional and international cooperation to counter a phenomenon that is deeply rooted in societies and hits hard at individuals and groups at every level, from this rostrum we assure the whole world that we, as Arabs and Muslims, are in the vanguard of nations that stand firmly and decisively against crime in all its forms. Our Islamic principles and moral values are the main impulse behind our struggle

and call for virtue, goodness and the rejection of corruption and evil behaviour.

We have come here today to contribute to shielding humanity from dangers and scourges of every kind. We have come to support all actions and measures to reduce the illicit supply of and demand for narcotic drugs and psychotropic substances and oppose any effort to legalize any kind of drug, regardless of the justification. We have come to enhance and increase cooperation with the specialized agencies of the United Nations and to pursue the follow-up implementation of the General Assembly's resolutions with regard to providing financial and technical support for some Arab States in order to assist them to combat the production, traffic and consumption of drugs. The Arab world belongs to the larger world, which benefits from our efforts as much as we benefit from its efforts in the struggle against a problem that plagues us all. We are all working together to eradicate the illicit cultivation; limit the illicit deviation of precursors; implement controlled delivery operations; target, pursue and apprehend members of distribution and trafficking gangs and cartels; and undertake other constructive and fruitful measures of cooperation.

We wish this session every success and reaffirm our commitment to working together for a drug-free world.

The President: I thank the Secretary-General, Arab Interior Ministers' Council of the League of Arab States, for his statement.

I now give the floor to Mr. Christopher Bakwesegha, Chairman of the delegation of the Organization of African Unity.

Mr. Bakwesegha (Organization of African Unity): Allow me first of all to reiterate the condolences recently expressed by Mr. Salim Ahmed Salim, Secretary-General of the Organization of African Unity, on the sudden death of General Sani Abacha of Nigeria. May his soul rest in peace.

In their interventions before this special session of the General Assembly on drugs, participants have illustrated that the drug problem is tearing at societies and that no nation, however powerful, can feel secure in the presence of this menace. They have argued that the drug problem threatens human values, engenders crime, spreads AIDS and undermines our social and economic development endeavours. Above all, participants have pointed out that drugs kill. Therefore, the drug problem is not something

that we can walk away from. Indeed, history will judge us harshly if we simply wash our hands and say we have nothing to do with it.

On behalf of the Organization of African Unity (OAU), therefore, I would like to thank the Secretary-General of the United Nations for convening the present session to enable nations near and far to exchange views, share their experiences, plan together and work out strategies which could help improve the international community's response to the problem of drugs. We concur that, in order to remain effective in our enduring struggle against the drug menace, we must pull together and we must strengthen our existing drug mechanisms and dovetail them into international drug control strategies. Indeed, cooperation and partnership offer the best prospects for the eradication of the drug menace, due regard being given to the new and imaginative partnerships of cooperation at the subregional level as well as at the level of civil society.

Deeply concerned with the drug problem, the African heads of State and Government adopted a Plan of Action on drug abuse and illicit trafficking control in Africa in 1996. The Plan of Action addresses, *inter alia*, the issues of reducing the illicit demand for drugs, the suppression of illicit drug trafficking, international cooperation, bilateral and multilateral cooperation agreements, as well as community mobilization. It also highlights the role of the regional economic communities and the Organization of African Unity (OAU) in monitoring international drug treaties. It further provides a framework for a coordinated, comprehensive and concerted international approach to combat drug abuse and illicit trafficking in Africa and helps increase the commitment of Governments to identify priority actions for drug eradication and related problems.

For the purposes of implementing the Plan — and realizing the need for international cooperation for combating illicit drug-trafficking — Member States have now entered into bilateral and multilateral cooperation agreements and are forging technical cooperation to mobilize action for controlling drug abuse and illicit trafficking at national, subregional and regional levels. Along with this, efforts have been deployed to develop human resources to successfully deal with drug cases and for Africa to effectively use its existing institutions to train drug-law-enforcement officers.

Allow me now to draw the attention of this body to the African common position, which was formulated

during the African group of experts meeting, and which was adopted by the African Ministers of labour and social affairs and endorsed by the OAU Council of Ministers at the recently concluded thirty-fourth Assembly of Heads of State and Government.

This African position underscores the multifaceted drug problems of the continent and makes recommendations that should be implemented within the African context. This Assembly is therefore urged to consider those issues that are peculiar to Africa or that affect Africa more than the other continents. As African States establish national drug-control administrations for coordinating, monitoring and controlling drug activities, the international community and, in particular, the United Nations International Drug Control Programme are called upon to assist those administrations in devising drug-control programmes and in providing technical assistance for their implementation.

For its part, the OAU will continue with its activities relating to the monitoring of the implementation of the African Plan of Action, as well as of the common position, and deploy efforts to promote accession to the international treaties. In this regard, it should be noted that out of the 53 member States of the OAU, 43 are parties to the 1961 Convention, 41 are parties to the 1971 Convention and 37 are parties to the 1988 Convention. Efforts are also being deployed to ensure that those States that have not yet done so do accede to the conventions.

In conclusion, it is now my pleasant duty to inform the Assembly that OAU Secretary-General, Mr. Salim Ahmed Salim has agreed to be a member of the Committee of Wise Men established by the United Nations Secretary-General in his endeavour to eliminate the scourge of drugs.

As the United Nations Secretary-General once said, the fight against drugs requires vision and perseverance. I wish to pledge that the OAU will spare no effort in working with vision and perseverance and in tandem with the international community in our common endeavour to free the world of the drug menace.

The President: I thank the Chairman of the delegation of the Organization of African Unity for his statement.

We have heard the last speaker in the general debate, and thus we have concluded our consideration of agenda item 8.

Agenda items 9, 10, 11 and 12

Review of international drug control instruments

- (a) Adherence to and implementation of international drug control treaties
- (b) Review of General Assembly resolution S-17/2 of 23 February 1990, adopted by the Assembly at its seventeenth special session, in particular progress made in implementing the Global Programme of Action annexed thereto

Measures to promote implementation of the international drug control treaties and to strengthen international cooperation in the fight against the illicit production, sale, demand, traffic and distribution of narcotic drugs and psychotropic substances and related activities, including corruption; and proposals for new strategies, methods and practical activities in addressing the problem of drug abuse and illicit trafficking, with due regard to the gender perspective, in particular

- (a) Judicial cooperation and strengthening of national legislation
- (b) Prevention of the diversion of chemicals used in the illicit manufacture of narcotic drugs and psychotropic substances, and measures to strengthen control of the manufacture of and trafficking in stimulants and their precursors
- (c) Reduction of the illicit demand for drugs, including the draft declaration on the guiding principles of demand reduction and its implementation
- (d) Prevention, sanctioning and action against money-laundering
- (e) International cooperation in illicit crop eradication and alternative development
- (f) Coordination within the United Nations system in the fight against drug-trafficking and related organized crime, against terrorist groups engaged in drug-trafficking and against illicit arms trade
- (g) Promoting regional cooperation

**Review of the international drug control regime:
strengthening United Nations machinery for drug
control**

**Report of the Ad Hoc Committee of the Whole of
the Twentieth Special Session (A/S-20/11)**

**Adoption of the final documents of the twentieth special
session and follow-up measures for their implementation**

The President: I now request Mr. N. K. Singh of India, Vice-Chairman and Rapporteur of the Ad Hoc Committee of the Whole of the Twentieth Special Session, to introduce the report of the Committee.

Mr. Singh (India), Vice-Chairman and Rapporteur of the Ad Hoc Committee of the Whole: I have the honour to present to the General Assembly today the report of the Ad Hoc Committee of the Whole of the Twentieth Special Session of the General Assembly, which is contained in document A/S-20/11.

The Ad Hoc Committee held two meetings, on 8 and 9 June, to consider the three agenda items allocated to it by the General Assembly, namely, items 9, 10 and 11. In paragraph 23 of its report, the Ad Hoc Committee recommends three draft resolutions to the General Assembly for adoption, and in paragraph 24, it recommends one draft decision.

I thus submit the report of the Ad Hoc Committee of the Whole of the Twentieth Special Session to the General Assembly for its consideration and adoption.

The President: I thank the Vice-Chairman and Rapporteur of the Ad Hoc Committee of the Whole of the Twentieth Special Session for the introduction of the report.

If there is no proposal under rule 66 of the rules of procedure, I shall take it that the Assembly will not discuss the report.

It was so decided.

The President: Statements will therefore be limited to explanations of vote, but I hope that there will be no such statements.

The Assembly will now proceed to take a decision on the three draft resolutions recommended by the Ad Hoc Committee of the Whole of the Twentieth Special Session

in paragraph 23 of its report (A/S-20/11), and the draft decision recommended by the Ad Hoc Committee of the Whole in paragraph 24 of the same report. I hope that Members are in possession of the report of the Committee.

We turn first to the three draft resolutions.

Draft resolution I is entitled "Political Declaration". The text of draft resolution I is contained for the time being in document A/S-20/4, chapter V, section A.

Draft resolution I was recommended by the Ad Hoc Committee of the Whole of the Twentieth Special Session for adoption.

May I take it that the General Assembly decides to adopt draft resolution I?

Draft resolution I was adopted (resolution S-20/2).

The President: Draft resolution II is entitled "Declaration on the Guiding Principles of Drug Demand Reduction". The text of draft resolution II is contained for the time being in document A/S-20/4, chapter V, section A.

Draft resolution II was recommended by the Ad Hoc Committee of the Whole of the Twentieth Special Session for adoption.

May I take it that the Assembly decides to adopt draft resolution II?

Draft resolution II was adopted (resolution S-20/3).

The President: Draft resolution III is entitled "Measures to enhance international cooperation to counter the world drug problem". The text of draft resolution III is contained for the time being in document A/S-20/4, chapter V, section A.

Draft resolution III was recommended by the Ad Hoc Committee of the Whole of the Twentieth Special Session for adoption.

May I take it that the Assembly decides to adopt draft resolution III?

Draft resolution III was adopted (resolution S-20/4).

The President: We next turn to the draft decision recommended for adoption by the Ad Hoc Committee of the Whole in paragraph 24 of its report. The draft decision is entitled "Documentation considered by the Ad Hoc Committee of the Whole".

May I take it that the General Assembly wishes to adopt the draft decision?

The draft decision was adopted.

The President: We have thus concluded our consideration of agenda items 9, 10, 11 and 12.

Statement by the representative of the Secretary-General

I now give the floor to Under-Secretary-General Pino Arlacchi, as the representative of the Secretary-General.

Mr. Arlacchi (Executive Director of the United Nations International Drug Control Programme): It is my great honour to address this concluding meeting of the twentieth special session of the General Assembly on behalf of Secretary-General Kofi Annan.

The end of this session marks the start of a new chapter in global drug control. We have sent the world a message of hope this week. The decades of nations pointing fingers at each other are finished.

We are not starting a new "war on drugs"; in fact, there never was one. The better analogy for the international community is that of a doctor facing a deadly disease. Drugs, quite simply, kill people, and it is our responsibility to help find the cure.

With the adoption of the Political Declaration and the action plans, we have taken further steps towards a drug-free world. Member States should be proud of what they have accomplished in New York during these three days. But the real work begins tomorrow. The international community must take this spirit of accomplishment and meet the deadlines of 2003 and 2008 to eliminate or significantly reduce the consumption and production of all illegal drugs. And we must foil the money launderer and the drug trafficker at every turn.

Some have said that the special session was diplomatic business as usual. It is imperative that we prove otherwise. Our work cannot simply be left on a piece of paper in this Hall. We cannot pat ourselves on the back and move on to

other issues. There is always room for improvement. There is always more that can be done. This means continuing to listen carefully to those who provide constructive criticism on how we can create a drug-free world. No one has a monopoly on the truth.

The responsibility to keep moving forward now depends on Member States' commitment to take full ownership of these plans and their desire to achieve concrete results. Pledges must turn into implementation, actions and results. The eyes of the world are upon us. This is not the time to sit on the sidelines. We intend to fully succeed — and we will certainly never give up.

We must heed the examples set by other important United Nations conferences — on the environment, women's issues, population and social development — and move forward with a sense of purpose and action. The drug-control issue has now been similarly raised to the top of the global agenda. This means building on the political momentum while constantly remembering the framework of international cooperation and respect for sovereignty, as embodied in the Charter of the United Nations.

The concepts of tolerance and solidarity for human rights are precious, and we must remain vigilant in their defence. We will treasure this in every moment of our work. However, we should not forget that the notion that drug use is a kind of human right is inherently immoral, as it suggests that human lives are not worth saving from the devastation of addiction.

At the international level, the United Nations International Drug Control Programme will continue to be there every step of the way, assisting Governments and non-governmental actors in meeting goals and working towards a more civil society.

Let us all go forward with the resolve that the commitment we have made to work for a drug-free world will be met with actions and the resources needed to ensure real and measurable results. Together we can meet this challenge. Now, let's get to work.

The President: I thank Under-Secretary-General Pino Arlacchi for his statement.

Statement by the President

The President: We are about to conclude the twentieth special session of the General Assembly. When

it opened the day before yesterday, by one of its first actions the Assembly approved the official title of the special session as "Twentieth special session of the General Assembly devoted to countering the world drug problem together". Stylistically, this represents a welcome departure from some of the longer and more formal-sounding United Nations names. Substantively, however, this title, I think, expresses the key motif that characterized this session: the United Nations membership's togetherness in confronting a common menace.

Significantly, this spirit of togetherness was established from the very beginning and, as a direct result, the preparatory process yielded crucial agreement on all the underlying political issues, despite the occasional divergence of views and the sensitivity of some of the problems.

We have witnessed an involved and pragmatic discussion of future action, follow-up and implementation. The three days of intensive and businesslike work have also demonstrated the unswerving commitment of Member States to the task of eradicating the peril of narcotic drugs from the face of the earth.

The strong showing of world political leaders is bound to give an impetus to international drug control efforts. At the same time, the presence at the session of senior Government officials directly involved in the fight against drugs has benefited greatly the work of the session. A total of 158 speakers took part in the general debate, including 23 heads of State, eight Prime Ministers, one Vice-President and seven observers. Meanwhile, joining the discussions in the Ad Hoc Committee of the Whole were several United Nations agencies and programmes, as well as representatives of non-governmental organizations designated by their constituencies.

The past three days have given us a rich and thought-provoking picture of the state of national efforts in different parts of the world to tackle the drug problem, as the speakers described their programmes, offered perceptive analyses and made sound suggestions.

Many delegations not only spoke about their own experiences dealing with the drug menace but also offered to share them with others in combating this dangerous phenomenon. At the same time, while acknowledging the primary responsibility of national Governments, they have stressed the importance of enhancing concerted international actions in this sphere — first of all, under the auspices of relevant United Nations agencies. In this

context, many speakers underscored the need for a more coordinated approach among various United Nations bodies to address the drug problems effectively. They gave full backing to the strategy pursued by the United Nations International Drug Control Programme, which is based on a balanced and multidisciplinary approach, with an increased focus on demand reduction.

The globalization of today's world has been mentioned numerous times in this Hall. But the fact that the term may have already become a cliché should not in anyway diminish the true significance of the concept itself. If anything, the success of the twentieth special session reflects the growing realization throughout our planet that we are all in the same boat. This has compelled a fundamental rethinking and a growing convergence of views on measures to combat drug abuse and illicit drug-trafficking.

The Political Declaration and other documents we have just adopted represent a new departure for a comprehensive, global strategy to tackle simultaneously all aspects of the drug problem. By putting forward a bold objective — a drastic reduction of both supply and demand for drugs by the year 2008 — the Political Declaration signifies a global consensus on the shared responsibility of all countries for the successful outcome of the fight against drug abuse and illicit trafficking. It spells out the obligations for all groups of countries, setting clear target dates to take action in agreed-upon areas.

So, as the result of this special session, we have before us a well-designed strategy and a package of measures and goals to be achieved within precise time-frames. We have three agenda-setting political documents that enjoy unanimous support. What is needed, then, for this session to go down in history as a truly watershed event is to make sure that all of these plans are translated into practical deeds. By working together we can launch a new period in countering the drug problem and send a strong positive message that the United Nations is capable of successfully tackling one of the most dangerous threats in today's world.

Before closing, let me once again extend my sincere thanks to all delegations for their cooperation during the past three days. I would like to express special gratitude to the Bureau of the Ad Hoc Committee of the Whole and to the Vice-Presidents of the Assembly, whose constant support made my task much easier. I think it is also very symbolic that addressing the General Assembly

this evening on behalf of the Secretary-General was Mr. Pino Arlacchi, the Executive Director of the United Nations International Drug Control Programme, who has made a valuable contribution to the success of this session. Finally, I would also like to pay tribute to the United Nations Secretariat and the General Assembly division, as well as to the interpreters, translators and all Conference Services staff and other staff who often remain unseen, but without whom the smooth functioning of the session would have been impossible. I thank you all.

Agenda item 2

Minute of silent prayer or meditation

The President: We have come to the end of the twentieth special session of the General Assembly.

May I invite representatives to stand and observe one minute of silent prayer or meditation.

The members of the General Assembly observed a minute of silence.

Closure of the twentieth special session of the General Assembly

The President: I declare closed the twentieth special session of the General Assembly.

The meeting rose at 9.55 p.m.